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June 19, 2001
1200.19

VHA HANDBOOK

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook establishes procedures, assigns responsibilities, and specifies authority for ensuring that the contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to research are appropriately acknowledged and publicly disclosed. This Handbook applies to all research results where either direct or indirect support for the research emanated from VA, either in the form of research funding, resources (e.g., facilities or patients), or as a result of the investigator's full-time, part-time, or without compensation (WOC) appointment. The policies herein extend to all forms of research results, including publications, presentations, media interviews, and other professional activities. NOTE: The provisions of this Handbook apply to all research services within the Office of Research and Development (ORD Medical Research Service (MRS), Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D), Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D), and the Cooperative Studies Program (CSP)).

2. SCOPE

a. The VA Research and Development (R&D) Program encourages free exchange of scientific, technical, and medical information both inside and outside VA. In keeping with this policy, VA investigators are encouraged to report their work at professional meetings and in scientific, technical, and medical publications, and to participate in the activities of their professional organizations.

b. The nature of medical and scientific R&D carries with it an enormous potential for media and public attention to the individuals and institutions involved. In the past, there have been occasions when VA investigators neglected to ensure proper identification of employment by VA and/or of the source of their research funding. Consequently, both credit and public attention were inappropriately focused on organizations other than VA. VA expects its contributions to medical and scientific research to receive due credit and places the burden of responsibility on its research investigators to comply with this policy.

c. The American public has a right and a need to know how public funds are expended. Therefore, VA and its employees have a responsibility to ensure that the Department receives proper credit for VA-supported research in articles, presentations, interviews, and other forms in which the results of that research are publicized.

d. All investigators will initiate and document references to VA where either direct or indirect support for the research emanated from VA, either in the form of research funding, resources (e.g., facilities or patients), or as a result of the investigator's full-time, part-time, or without compensation (WOC) employment status. This policy extends to all forms of research results including publications, presentations, media interviews, and other professional activities.

e. Failure to acknowledge VA support or employment, as stipulated in this Handbook may, at the discretion of the research service director (i.e., MRS, RR&D, HSR&D, or CSP), result in discontinuation of current VA R&D funding and/or ineligibility to receive future R&D funding for up to 5 years. In extreme circumstances, it may also result in the revocation of the privilege to conduct research at the VA.

3. PROCEDURES FOR ACKNOWLEDGING VA RESEARCH SUPPORT AND VA EMPLOYMENT

a. Acknowledgement of VA Research Support. All publications and presentations of VA research results must contain the following (or equivalent) acknowledgement:

(1) "This material is based upon work supported (or supported in part) by the Office of Research and Development (add as applicable Medical Research Service, Rehabilitation R&D Service, Health Services R&D Service, or Cooperative Studies Program), Department of Veterans Affairs."

(2) If VA provided no direct research funding, but the research involved the use of other VA resources, e.g., facilities or patients, publications or presentations must contain a similar acknowledgement. For example, "This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the (name and location of VA medical center)."

b. Acknowledgement of VA Employment. Authors of clinical and research manuscripts, abstracts, books, book chapters, and presentations must acknowledge their employment using the following format: "VA Title, VA Service, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, [City], [State]."

(1) When the author also holds a faculty appointment, the academic title and school also may be acknowledged.

(2) When the Principal Investigator (PI) has a 5/8ths or more VA appointment, VA must be named first, regardless whether VA is the primary source of funding or where the funds are administered.

(3) Authors or presenters of research results are required to list VA employment first if any of the following conditions apply:

(a) Work was funded primarily from VA resources (50 percent or more), either directly or indirectly;

(b) The research was conducted primarily in VA facilities; or the

(c) First author was a junior scientist (e.g., resident, fellow trainee) whose salary may not have been provided by VA, but who primarily used VA funding or facilities, or whose mentor or supervisor was primarily employed or funded by VA.

c. VA Acknowledgement in Media Reports. News media and other individuals outside VA may not understand the contributions and roles of VA in intellectual advances, or VA's collaborative

relationships with universities and other affiliated institutions. Accordingly, scientists and physicians with VA salaries and/or funding support must, when presenting their work or discussing it with the news media, make a serious and good-faith effort to obtain appropriate recognition for VA. A serious and good-faith effort requires:

(1) Securing a verbal agreement that VA will be cited in news reports before participating in a media interview, or

(2) Prior to interviews, providing news media with a document on VA letterhead that:

(a) contains the investigator's name, VA title, and VA medical center,

(b) explains the importance to VA of citing the investigator's VA employment in any resulting feature, and

(c) expresses a preference that the investigator's VA title be used when media time or space limitations permit the use of only one professional title.

(3) The media's failure to acknowledge VA support despite an investigator's good-faith effort to comply will not jeopardize the investigator's funding.

d. Publications by Contractors. The publication of research results by firms providing contracted services to VA will be governed by terms of the contract. The contract terms must be consistent with the provisions of this Handbook with respect to review and acknowledgement of VA support.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Medical Center Directors or Designees. The Medical Center Director, or designee, will encourage appropriate presentation and publication of all significant research results to ensure that: VA support for health research is publicly disclosed; VA receives appropriate recognition for its contribution to health research; research presentations are made in a scientifically responsible manner; potential for controversy is anticipated and dealt with appropriately; and that VA research policies and procedures regarding publications and presentations are followed. Medical Center Directors or designees therefore must:

(1) Ensure that manuscripts, abstracts, and other presentations are reviewed by the R&D Committee, or a designee such as the Associate Chief of Staff for Research (ACOS/R&D), prior to presentation or publication. This will ensure that the presentation or publication satisfactorily acknowledges VA support and affiliation, protects the privacy of patients, and indicates that the welfare of human and animal subjects was protected and the appropriate institutional review board approved all research involving human or animal subjects.

(2) Develop and implement procedures to ensure appropriate coordination with local Public Affairs officials.

(3) Develop and implement local procedures to ensure that pending publications and presentations are brought to the attention of VA R&D Communications at the time they are accepted for publication or presentation. These local procedures are to be developed in consultation with VA R&D Communications. Procedures for coordinating research publicity are contained in Appendix A.

(4) Develop and implement local procedures to ensure observance of any additional policies of the VA Central Office research services regarding the publication and presentation of research results. There are specific requirements for publications by investigators funded by HSR&D and RR&D. Publications by HSR&D investigators shall be coordinated in accordance with procedures described in the VHA Handbook issued by HSR&D, "Required Notification Regarding Publication or Presentation of

Research Findings." Investigators funded by RR&D shall refer to VHA Handbooks regarding the RR&D merit review program and the Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development for additional information.

b. R&D Committee. The R&D Committee must perform those responsibilities delegated to it by the Medical Center Director.

c. ACOS or Coordinator for R&D. The ACOS/R&D or Coordinator for R&D must perform those responsibilities delegated by the Medical Center Director.

d. Investigator. The investigator must:

(1) Acknowledge VA support and/or employment (as prescribed in paragraph 3) in all presentations or publications of research results.

(2) Submit all presentations or publications to the locally designated review groups or individuals prior to submission for publication or other public presentation.

(3) Inform the research office at the local VA medical center at least 8 weeks (or as soon as possible) prior to the expected publication or public presentation.

e. R&D Communications. VA R&D Communications is responsible for coordinating research publicity in accordance with procedures described in Appendix A.

VHA HANDBOOK 1200.19 APPENDIX A

PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATING RESEARCH PUBLICITY

RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION
Research Office[NL](Medical Center)	Notifies VA Research and Development (R&D) Communications when research results are accepted for presentation or publication in a scientific journal. Notification may be by fax, mail or e-mail, according to procedures available from R&D Communications. The notification must include an abstract of the study, a brief (1-3 sentence) statement of the study's central finding(s) and potential impact, the name of the journal or meeting, and the anticipated publication or presentation date. The Research Office is also responsible for observing any additional notification requirements of the local Public Affairs Office and of individual services within the Office of Research and Development (ORD), as described in this appendix.

R&D Communications Provides advice and guidance to local research offices in developing procedures for ensuring compliance with this Handbook. Informs Office of Under Secretary for Health and, simultaneously, ORD, and the Director of the applicable research service within the ORD, of the research publication or presentation. Works with Office of Public Affairs and Medical Center Public Affairs Officers and makes appropriate news media arrangements in concert with the Principal Investigator and appropriate Research Service Director.

